



# Colombia FTA Facts

Office of the United States Trade Representative  
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## Broad Support For U.S. – Colombia Free Trade Agreement

### What They're Saying:

“The Colombia free trade agreement (FTA) will further enhance Tennessee's competitiveness and level the playing field for Tennessee's exporters. For more than 16 years Congress has given more than 90 percent of Colombian imports duty-free access to the American market, while American exporters to Colombia still pay hundreds of millions in tariffs each year. The FTA would make trade with Colombia a two-way street, benefiting America's businesses, farmers and workers.”

- Secretary Carlos Gutierrez and Senator Bob Corker, *Op-ed in The Memphis Commercial Appeal*,  
March 14, 2008

“The CTPA [Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement] is a free trade agreement, so it is important to begin with some straight talk about trade. Current tariffs between the United States and Colombia are one-sided; 99.9 percent of Colombia's exports already enter the U.S. duty-free. No U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia receive duty-free treatment. The CTPA will level this playing field.... Colombia is already our fifth largest trading partner in Latin America and the largest export market for our agricultural products in South America. Last year, the value of U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia reached a record \$1.2 billion. They included \$500 million of yellow corn, \$210 million of wheat and barley, \$175 million of soybeans and soybean products and \$59 million of cotton. U.S. producers achieved these results despite the tariff and non-tariff barriers that are now in place. With those barriers removed, U.S. producers could compete for a larger share of Colombia's business.”

- Secretary Ed Schafer, *Op-ed in The Hill*, March 13, 2008.

“Facts are stubborn things, and so it is with trade in general and the North American Free Trade Agreement in particular. Contrary to what some of the candidates are saying, Ohio is benefiting from trade and from NAFTA in extraordinary ways, and no one more than the state's manufacturers.... Many people don't know that the U.S. market is already wide open to imports; our average duty on imports is about 2 percent. But countries such as Colombia and South Korea impose an average tariff on U.S. manufactured goods of 11 percent - just as Mexico did before NAFTA.... The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates the trade agreements with Colombia and South Korea could boost U.S. exports by more than \$25 billion. Saying no to trade deals is the wrong prescription for Ohio manufacturers. And ending NAFTA would be a disaster for the state's manufacturing workers. On trade, politicians campaigning for high office should remember the Hippocratic oath: First, do no harm.”

- Daniel W. Christman (Senior Vice President for International Affairs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), *Op-ed in Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 11, 2008.

“We are asking our allies around the world to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us to fight terrorism, and we must not abandon the people of Colombia, who are doing this very task. There is something that can

prove more powerful and lasting than acts of terrorism and war, and that is inclusion in the international arena. It is time for U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to stop delaying a vote on the ratification of the Colombian Trade Promotion Agreement.”

- Representative Dan Burton, *Op-ed in Miami Herald, March 8, 2008*

“There's just been a real transformation in this country. This is a country that has made tremendous strides to provide security for its population... [however], they're clearly very open about all the challenges they face.”

- Representative Jim Matheson, *quoted in The Salt Lake Tribune, March 5, 2008*

“Opposition to this free trade agreement is purely union politics. It's not rational and it's not in the best interest of either country. It makes no sense that we would continue to operate under a system that provides advantages to Colombian businesses exporting products to the U.S. and not provide the same advantages to U.S. companies and their employees who want to sell products in Colombia. I hope Speaker Pelosi will allow the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement to come to the floor of the House and allow members to vote their conscience.... We began Plan Colombia in 1999 under the Clinton administration and have invested around \$5.7 billion in Colombia. President Uribe has made tremendous improvements in security and economic growth and approving this free trade agreement is critically important to Colombia as it continues to chart a successful democratic and economic future.”

- Senator Bob Corker, *quoted in The Chattanooga, March 3, 2008*

“Rarely have the facts been arrayed so compellingly in favor of a trade accord that is squarely in the economic and security interests of the United States as well as our friends in Colombia. Logically and morally, the case for Congress to approve it is overwhelming. For American business, the economic case for the agreement centers on fairness.... In the end, the case for the Colombia trade agreement isn't just economic and geopolitical, it's logical and moral. If the goal is to give opportunities to working Americans on factory floors or Colombians rescuing their nation from drug violence, what possible benefit could there be in defeating this trade agreement? This is why I am confident that Congress will use its head — and its heart — and approve the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement.”

- Thomas J. Donohue (President and CEP of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce),  
*Op-ed in The Politico, March 3, 2008*

“It is time to set the record straight on the benefits of NAFTA by looking at the facts and then pressing Congress to pass pending free-trade agreements. These agreements will increase the state's manufacturing competitiveness around the world and strengthen the security of Ohio's 308,000 manufacturing jobs that depend on exports.... Instead of sitting on the sidelines, let's fight the good game by enacting the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, which remains stalled on Capitol Hill after more than two years. A completed agreement will provide Ohio manufacturers nearly unfettered access to one of the world's fastest-growing markets.”

- John Engler (President of the National Association of Manufacturers and former three-term governor of Michigan), *Op-ed in Columbus Dispatch, February 29, 2008*

“Congress' failure to pass the Colombian trade deal may just be the smoking-gun example Mr. Chavez needs to make his case. Our reputation as a global leader is at stake. And the world is watching how Congress responds to this challenge. Given no alternative, I plan on voting later today to extend the current Colombian trade preference program. But we can and should do better by our Colombian allies and by American workers who depend on exports for their livelihoods. Congress must pass the Colombian Trade Promotion Act.”

- Representative Roy Blunt, *Op-ed in Washington Times, February 26, 2008*

“The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement is our single most effective tool to help bring economic and political security to Colombia.... Congress must push rhetoric aside and partner with Colombia in their efforts in establishing a secure and vibrant democracy.... A trade deal would extend our current trade relationship from a set of revocable unilateral preferences to a relationship where U.S. industry enjoys the same benefits already granted to Colombia through the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act. With a permanent trade promotion agreement, the Colombian market would open on a reciprocal basis to U.S. goods, allowing 80 percent of U.S. consumer and industrial products to immediately enter Colombia duty-free. This helps workers and allows U.S. exporters to be more competitive at a time of increased challenges. In addition, labor provisions in the core text would require enforcement of domestic labor laws. It is time to level the playing field for ourselves while helping the people of Colombia.”

- Susan Segal (*President and CEO of the Americas Society and the Council of the America*), *Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle*, February 25, 2008

“Benefits from free trade are real.... As President Bush reminded us in the State of the Union address, Colombia is 'a friend of America that is confronting violence and terror and fighting drug traffickers.' It has more than earned the trade benefits Congress refuses to approve.”

- Ed Feulner (*President of The Heritage Foundation*), *Op-ed in The Indianapolis Star*, February 5, 2008

“The seeming reluctance of congressional Democrats to consider a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) for Colombia, and the hostile reception of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe in Washington last year by Democratic leadership calls into question whether they at all support one of America's staunchest allies in that region. Colombia remains a developing country that for decades has been wracked by civil conflict and an illicit narcotics trade that ends up on American streets. For these reasons, U.S. assistance for Colombia under the Clinton and Bush administrations has exceeded \$5 billion. Many believe a FTA would ensure a sustainable return on our already significant foreign investment in that country.”

- Senator Judd Gregg, *Op-ed in Washington Times*, February 2, 2008

“Free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea would merely require a congressional coalition of Republicans and free-trade Democrats, though that may be equally hard to come by, of course. Still, it is greatly in the interest of the United States to close those deals, not only to reach markets with tariff-free access to 100 million new consumers, but as the president pointed out: ‘If we fail we will embolden the purveyors of false populism.’”

- Helle Dale, *Op-ed in Washington Times*, January 31, 2008

“This year, the Democratic majority managed to shift the emphasis of Plan Colombia aid away from anti-drug and anti-guerrilla activities toward humanitarian initiatives—including rural employment opportunities, assistance for displaced persons, the rebuilding of war-torn communities, and the protection of human rights. Democrats, or at least an important number of them, know that all of these goals will be reinforced by the economic benefits of a free trade pact with the United States—particularly a pact that requires further attention to human and labor rights from the Colombian government. If the FTA is approved, the Democratic leadership can take substantial credit for encouraging a more humanitarian, more socially progressive, and more rights-directed course in Colombia. This is the main incentive for Democratic support for the Colombia-U.S. free trade agreement.”

- Peter Hakim, *Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle*, January 29, 2008

“High tech is America's largest export sector. Let's keep it that way by supporting free trade. The right action today is to fervently support policies that facilitate trade between nations, such as free trade agreements and presidential Trade Promotion Authority. Congress will consider free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea this year, and CEA [Consumer Electronics

Association] is urging their swift passage, as well as reauthorization of TPA, which allows the president to negotiate workable trade agreements. These steps will create high-paying U.S. jobs and help ensure the continued pre-eminence of the U.S. economy.”

- Gary Shapiro, *Op-ed in Las Vegas Review-Journal, January 8, 2008*

“In 2006, two-way trade with Colombia totaled \$16 billion. That could grow a lot bigger, reason enough to OK a free-trade deal. But free-trade deals also offer something else to the U.S.: a way to project “soft power” to strengthen its ties with democracies in the Western Hemisphere.... Free-trade treaties are actually a big opportunity to draw friendly countries like Colombia closer to the U.S. The high investment they attract creates jobs and reduces the appeal of hard-left populism.”

- Monica Showalter, *Op-ed in Investor's Business Daily, January 3, 2008*

“It is impossible for someone to go to Colombia and not be impressed with the strides they have made in very real ways.”

- Representative Eliot Engel, *quoted in Congress Daily, December 20, 2007*

“More important, in his five years in office, he [President Uribe] has taken on the drug dealers, the guerrilla movements and the paramilitaries and dramatically reduced the level of violence, guerrilla activities, kidnappings and killings... thanks to him, Colombia is a real country again. We need to support him and the way to do it is to pass a free trade agreement.”

- Morgan Smith, *Op-ed in Rocky Mountain News, December 12, 2007*

“The progress in Medellín reflects a broader Colombian renaissance. By virtually every metric--security, political, economic, and social--the long-beleaguered South American country has made remarkable strides.... The U.S.-Colombia free trade pact would give American exporters the same market access that Colombian exporters have enjoyed under unilateral trade preference programs.”

- Duncan Currie, *Op-ed in The Weekly Standard, December 10, 2007 print edition*

“...the United States can make a difference in South America, in terms of Venezuelan influence. And here's how: The Congress can pass a free trade agreement with Colombia.... I like to quote Prime Minister Stephen Harper who said, the biggest fear in South America is not the leader in Venezuela, but the biggest fear for stability is if the United States Congress rejects the free trade agreement with Colombia. It would be an insult to a friend. It would send a contradictory message to a country led by a very strong leader, who is working hard to deal with some very difficult problems, one of which is armed gangs of people that are ruthless and brutal -- people who just kidnap innocent people for the sake of achieving political objectives. And so a vote for democracy took place, a very strong vote for democracy. And the United States policy can help promote democracies and stability. And again, I'm going to repeat to you: If the Congress does not pass the free trade agreement with Colombia, it will be a destabilizing moment.”

- President George W. Bush at a press conference, *December 4, 2007*

“The best place to start is with the prompt passage and signing of the Colombian free trade agreement, which has been languishing in Congress for months. Swift U.S. ratification of the pact would send an unequivocal message to the people of Colombia, the opposition in Venezuela and the wider region that they do not stand alone against Chávez. It would also provide concrete economic opportunities to the people of Colombia, helping to offset the restrictions being imposed by Venezuela -- and it would strengthen the U.S. economy in the bargain.”

- Donald Rumsfeld, *Op-ed in Washington Post, December 2, 2007*

“By promptly passing the trade agreement, Congress will help cement these reforms and send the unmistakable signal to other Latin American nations that Washington takes seriously economic and democratic liberalization. The economic reasons for passage are as compelling as the national-security arguments that McCaffrey outlined. Colombia is developing into a regional economic power, and it is the second-largest Latin American market for U.S. agriculture exports.”

- *Brigitte Schmidt Gwyn (Director of Business Roundtable), Op-ed in Miami Herald, November 30, 2007*

“Colombia is our fifth largest trading partner in South America and the largest importer of U.S. agricultural products. In 2006, 92 percent of imports from Colombia entered the U.S. duty-free, while tariffs were imposed on virtually all American goods going into their country. A pending trade agreement in Congress would eliminate those tariffs and create a larger market for, among other things, agricultural products and manufactured goods from Mississippi.... In return, the pact will enable Colombia to enhance its ability to compete in the global marketplace.”

- *Representative Roger Wicker, Op-ed in The Clarion-Ledger, November 26, 2007*

“Not passing the trade agreement would be a slap in the face quite frankly to the leadership of this country and will also be used by our adversaries in this region to try to taunt the Colombians and say well you have such a great friend in the United States, they wouldn't even stand with you on the trade deal. There is some emotion in this issue. It is important trade wise, it is important for jobs, but there is a certain prestige associated with this agreement being passed at this time that the President here needs and that we need to support our ally. I came in support, already supporting the free trade agreement. I intend to go back and try to work with my colleagues and help them understand how important this is for this country and our good ally for this democracy to continue to flourish and provide opportunities to the people that democracies typically do.”

- *Representative Conaway, Interview by Agritalk, November 20, 2007*

“I can assure you that during this administration, President Uribe has made incredible strides not only in the human rights issue but you know in the poverty issues, trying to figure out what you do with, how you absorb, you know, the drugs off the streets and take them off the streets so they don't end up in America so that we can actually start working in a way that we move this economy of this country.... Part of the problem and I see back in Congress is really a political fight between the leadership in the House and the Senate and the administration and I would wish that we can put partisanship aside to move forward”

- *Representative John Salazar, Interview by Agritalk, November 20, 2007*

“The success and stability of Colombia and the Pan-American region depend on our ability to recognize the importance of this agreement to the United States, to Colombia's economy, to human rights progress and to enhanced U.S. national security.... The negotiations are done, and this historic agreement has been passed by the Colombian legislature. Support for Colombia and the trade agreement is smart foreign policy. Congress has a responsibility to act now.”

- *Barry McCaffrey (U.S. drug czar from 1996 to 2001), Op-ed in Washington Post, November 20, 2007*

“I think we're making progress on both the economic and civil society front with the passage of the FTA, and I do think it would be a pretty serious step backward if we're not able to do so.”

- *Thomas McLarty (President Clinton's former Chief of Staff), quoted in Reuters, November 13, 2007*

“So how do we save jobs in this country? By exporting manufactured goods and agricultural products that we can grow and that we can make. This allows us to do better than current law. Now, if you want to vote ``no," what do you get? You get status quo. I thought that's what we were trying to change. We don't

like status quo. We want more jobs in America. How do you get more jobs? You get more jobs by allowing people who are engaged in excess production to sell it to somebody else out of this country. That's what it's about. There is one more aspect that I would like to touch on briefly, the national security aspect. South America is going to go one way or the other. I was just in Colombia, South America this last weekend. Chavez and Venezuela is against this. Are you with Chavez or are you with America? That really is basically what I am trying to talk about.”

- Representative John Tanner, *Statement from the House Floor, November 7, 2007*

“It's [U.S. – Colombia TPA] something that the Congress should take up and debate thoroughly and examine thoroughly. But my instinct tells me that if we are already allowing this country's products into our country and we are able to eliminate the tariff on our goods, we ought to take that step.”

- Representative Bob Goodlatte, *quoted in Farm Progress, November 6, 2007*

“It was a great opportunity in a very short period of time to see what great progress Colombia has made in dealing with the drug problem, particularly in Medellin. The fact that they have cut down on the crime rate, particularly murders, and created a more stable environment for economic development to happen is a very positive success story.... What you don't realize is that it's a population of 45 million people, or almost 45 million people, where there are very stable, large urban areas, very stable parts of the country that are moving ahead and they're moving a very stable economy that could be a very good trading partner with the United States.... So I think it's something we do need to tell people, that Colombia is making great strides and building a great market economy.... Obviously we produce a lot of potatoes and a lot of custom product for a lot of different buyers around the globe, and we'd certainly like to get some of that product into Colombia. I think we would have a tremendous benefit of having a 30 percent tariff that's currently on our product going into that country basically being removed.”

- Senator Maria Cantwell, *Interview by Stewart Doan, November 5, 2007*

“All of us should hope that Democratic leaders in Congress figure out that not helping Colombia comes at too high a price. The time has come for the Florida congressional delegation to step up and urge the House leadership to approve this important agreement that will not only benefit Florida, the United States, but our neighbors to the south.”

-By Juan C. Zapata (*Republican state representative from Miami*), *Op-ed in South Florida Sun-Sentinel, November 5, 2007*

“‘We want to see a labor force with the opportunity to be able to organize themselves,’ she said. The Colombian government is making efforts to improve the situation, she said and it doesn't make sense to wait for ‘complete perfection’ before approving the agreement.”

- Senator Blanche Lincoln, *quoted in Dow Jones Newswires, November 4, 2007*

"Colombia is still being studied by the members, and as I told the ambassador who was here this morning ... we would want to work harder in getting votes for Colombia rather than bring the bill up and having it defeated, which we think would be a rebuff to a great president and to great country and a great ally.”

- Representative Charles Rangel, *quoted in Bureau of National Affairs, November 1, 2007*

“In this context, Colombia shows great potential for sustained growth that will surely be encouraged if the country manages to gain access to new markets through free-trade expansion, just as other countries in the region have done or will do soon.... Last year's negotiations toward a free-trade agreement with the United States are undeniable proof that the country is ready to take advantage of trade liberalization. Furthermore, the country is opening its economy based on the idea that expanded trade will improve the quality of life for its population.”

- Pamela Cox, *Op-ed in Miami Herald, October 17, 2007*

“Congress has an opportunity to make a lasting impact on economic prosperity and development in Latin America. Support of the free-trade agreements (FTAs) with Colombia, Panama and Peru will open new opportunities for countries that have made significant social and economic progress in the last few years.”

- *Brian Wanko (Director of government relations at the Council of the Americas),  
Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle, October 15, 2007*

“In the last 20 years, many countries in Latin America have made notable advances toward the construction of stable democracies, the promotion of free trade, and improvement of the quality of life of their inhabitants. The United States of America has supported these processes using, among other mechanisms, the signing, ratification, and implementation of free trade agreements.... I believe the implementation of these agreements would be of the greatest benefit [for Peru, Colombia, and Panama], for the United States, and for good relations between your country and Latin America. In addition, the ratification of these agreements would send an important signal of our shared commitment to commercial integration and the development of our continent. Respectfully, I exhort you to do what you can to help achieve this goal.”

— *H.E. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (President of Mexico),  
from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, October 15, 2007*

“This past spring, as part of a delegation to Congress with the Council of American Companies to promote the free trade agreement and Plan Colombia, I was shocked at the lack of interest in Latin American affairs among the people I talked to. This is what is wrong with our foreign policy. We are fickle partners who wait for the mountain to come to us, rather than going to the mountain.”

- *Vincent Volpi (CEO of PICA Corp.), Op-ed in USA Today, October 11, 2007*

“With humility and profound respect, I would like to suggest the importance of the U.S. Congress ratifying these agreements [with Peru, Colombia, and Panama], thinking not only in the benefits they would bring to the Latin American nations I have mentioned — benefits that would be considerable — but also of the benefits they would bring to the people of the United States.”

— *H.E. Oscar Arias (President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize laureate),  
from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, October 10, 2007*

“Congress now has a chance to consolidate the progress and do more to stabilize Colombia by passing a recently-negotiated free trade pact, known as the Colombian Trade Promotion Agreement. This would provide new markets for U.S. exporters as well as jobs and income for hundreds of thousands of Colombians.”

-*Senator Richard Lugar, Op-ed in Miami Herald, October 8, 2007*

“The United States has played an important role in the opening of markets by signing, ratifying, and implementing free trade agreements. Mexico, Chile, and the countries of Central America and the Dominican Republic today benefit from the valuable development tool of a free trade agreement with the United States. Three additional countries — Colombia, Panama and Peru — also signed free trade agreements with the United States .... We consider that it would be greatly beneficial for those countries, for the United States, and for good relations between your country and Latin America, that those free trade agreements be ratified.”

— *H.E. Elías Antonio Saca (President of El Salvador), H.E. Manuel Zelaya (President of Honduras), and  
H.E. Oscar Berger (President of Guatemala), from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, October 3, 2007*

“In my view, Colombia needs its democratic friends to lean forward and give them a chance at partnership and trade with North America. I am very concerned that some in the United States seem unwilling to do

that. What message does that send to those who want to share in freedom and prosperity?... If the U.S. turns its back on its friends in Colombia, this will set back our cause far more than any Latin American dictator could hope to achieve.”

— *Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister of Canada), from a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, September 25, 2007.*

“The future of this relationship now lies in the Colombian Free Trade Agreement, and its fate lies in the hands of this Congress. The adoption of a permanent trade agreement between our two nations would allow both countries free and unfettered access to each other’s markets — access American exports do not enjoy today.”

- *Representative Roy Blunt, Op-ed in The Politico, September 25, 2007*

“The foot-dragging in Congress is ironic, because the United States would benefit most from ratification of the U.S.–Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement—as it was originally negotiated.... It will also strengthen U.S. national security and provide, through economic growth, additional resources for the Colombian government to fight terrorists and cocaine traffickers.”

- *James M. Roberts (a research fellow at The Heritage Foundation), Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle, September 24, 2007*

“We should be absolutely clear of the consequences of not passing these agreements. If the United States does not stand with the true democrats of the Americas, who want to better their people’s lives not dominate them, then we will demonstrate exactly what the new autocrats are arguing – that democracy cannot deliver real benefits, that free markets and free trade are a road leading only to empty promises, and that the United States of America will not even stand with its best friends. Put simply: Failing to pass the FTAs with Peru, Panama, and especially Colombia would be a win for Hugo Chavez and a defeat for the forces of democracy in the hemisphere.”

- *U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, Op-ed in Latin Business Chronicle, September 24, 2007*

“President Bush wants to help Colombia on the road of prosperity and security. Today, we have the opportunity to do just that. Congress should pass these FTAs. Congress already allows 90 percent of their goods to enter our markets duty free. These FTAs will give our farmers and workers the same preferences Congress has given their workers. We know that open markets benefit our economy. Since 2001, our trade with FTA countries in the hemisphere has skyrocketed by 60 percent.”

- *Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, Op-ed in Miami Herald, September 20, 2007*

“Protectionists in Congress think there's no cost to shooting down pending free trade deals in the pipeline with Peru, Panama and Colombia. Don't tell that to Latin Americans desperately trying to keep Venezuelan bad boy Hugo Chavez out of their countries.”

- *Mary Anastasia O’Grady, Op-ed in Wall Street Journal, September 18, 2007*

“Unfortunately, opponents of the Colombia agreement have positioned it as a ‘reward’ that Colombia does not ‘deserve,’ rather than what it truly is: a critical vehicle to assist the Colombian people to defeat the scourges of narcotics trafficking and the vicious violence of unreconstructed guerrillas.... Importantly, the Colombia free trade agreement would also open a market to U.S. exports that has been closed, despite the fact that the U.S. market is open to Colombian goods. Rather than a reward for Colombia, this deal is a critical building block of U.S. strategic interests in the region.”

- *Eric Farnsworth and Gary Hufbauer, Op-ed in Baltimore Sun, August 2, 2007*



“We are going to find a way to get Colombia passed.... It is very important.”

- *Senator Max Baucus, The Weekly Standard, July 30, 2007*

“The goal was to strengthen and expand the consensus behind democracy and free markets that defines nearly our entire hemisphere today.... Some of our strongest democratic allies -- Panama, Peru and Colombia -- have made strategic commitments to us through their trade agreements.... The agreements we have negotiated are good and fair. Walking away from them now means walking away from the millions of people in these countries who believe that trade and investment are the key to their prosperity and well-being. It means walking away from our commitment to fight poverty and promote opportunity, and the consequences would be felt in the region for years to come.”

- *Secretary Condoleezza Rice, Op-ed in Miami Herald, July 15, 2007*

“All of us regard Colombia as a crucial ally in a region that deserves our active engagement, and the bill represents an effort to have U.S. funds help address the root of numerous problems there.”

- *Pelosi, Hoyer, Rangel, and Levin, Statement on Trade, July 2, 2007*

“There are important regional economic and political imperatives in favor of the Colombia agreement. It would affirm America’s interest in and commitment to Colombia’s economic development while also increasing market access for U.S. goods. Currently, the United States provides tariff-free access to many Colombian goods under the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Enforcement Act, but we are not afforded similar treatment in Colombia. This deal would change that.”

- *By Tom Daschle (former Democratic Senator from South Dakota),  
Op-ed in Washington Post, June 25, 2007*

“The pending U.S.-Colombia Trade Partnership represents a stark moment of truth for the United States, with huge implications for America’s relations with a key regional ally, its influence across Latin America and its efforts to extend freedom and democracy around the world.”

- *By Lawrence Haas, Op-ed in Miami Herald, June 25, 2007*

“Turning away from the Colombia Free Trade Agreement will not end discontent with stubborn poverty, inequality and political marginalization. Rather, it will lock out a valuable tool that can be used to assist in the improvement of rule of law, economic investment and the transition of the poor out of the dead-end informal economy into the more stable formal labor market.”

- *By Representative Gregory W. Meeks, Op-ed in Miami Herald, June 20, 2007*

“I believe that the positive reality generated by the free trade agreement between the United States and Chile might constitute a useful element for the Congress of your country [to consider] when the moment comes to decide on the approval of the Free Trade Agreements between the United States and Peru, Panama, and Colombia. Three years after our bilateral trade agreement came into force, the evaluation of its effects made by my Government, as well as the one of the Chilean public opinion, is clearly positive.... I would also like to emphasize that regarding environmental and labor issues, we are closely working with the authorities of your country in projects oriented to improve the quality as well as to strengthen the enforcement of our laws and regulations, in order to reach international standards.... I am certain that the respective approvals by the Congress of your country of the free trade agreements between the United States and Peru, Panama, and Colombia ... will benefit those countries as well as the rest of the American continent, whose common aspiration is to advance along the path of economic and social development in peace, freedom, and democracy. These approvals will also be beneficial for relations between the United States and Latin America, since they will stimulate trade and exchanges, as well as the global economic and political relations.”

— *H.E. Michelle Bachelet Jeria (President of Chile), from a letter to Speaker Pelosi, April 23, 2007*

## **Excerpts from Key Editorials:**

### **Bush Raises Stakes On Free Trade (Investor's Business Daily)**

March 12, 2008

“There's no good reason not to pass the Colombia pact. Colombia is our best ally in the hemisphere and, coming up from a long war, has a sharply improving democracy and human rights record. ‘No nation has ever improved as this one has,’ drug czar John Walters said in a recent interview with IBD.... Meanwhile, exports can help in America's effort to stave off recession. U.S. exports grew 12.6% in 2007, and exports to free-trade countries grew faster still. ‘Last year, exports accounted for 40% of U.S. growth,’ Bush noted. ‘Doesn't it make sense to open up markets, to continue to grow our good economy with exports?’”

### **To a freer Latin America (Arizona Republic)**

March 12, 2008

“Most Colombian exports to this country arrive largely duty-free, courtesy of the 1991 Andean Trade Preference Act, which reduced or eliminated trade barriers to Latin American countries that took effective steps to fight drug-trafficking. A former narco-terror hell on Earth, Colombia has taken greater steps to fight the narcotics cartels than, arguably, any nation in the region.... In 2006, for example, Arizona companies exported a relatively paltry \$9.8 million worth of manufactured goods and electronics to Colombia, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. And they paid a healthy fee for that privilege, including tariffs of 10 to 20 percent. Congressional approval of the Colombian free-trade agreement would strike that imbalance and almost certainly would prove an immediate godsend to Arizona manufacturers that do business with Bogotá.”

### **Colombia Has Earned Its Trade Pact (Investor's Business Daily)**

March 11, 2008

“With time for passage running out with the expiration of President Bush's fast-track authority in June, the pact likely is to come up for a vote soon, with or without the approval of congressional leaders. If congressional Democrats don't approve it, they'll be the most ungrateful partners any friend of the U.S. has encountered. Such ingratitude will reverberate in other countries and limit American influence. Colombia is an ally that deserves free-trade status and has done more than its share to earn it.”

### **The Chávez Democrats (Wall Street Journal)**

March 10, 2008

“Meanwhile, Colombian President Álvaro Uribe is embracing greater economic and political freedom. He has bravely assisted the U.S fight against narco-traffickers, and he now wants to link his country more closely to America with a free-trade accord. As a strategic matter, to reject Colombia's offer now would tell everyone in Latin America that it is far more dangerous to trust America than it is to trash it.”

### **Pass Colombia trade deal (Palm Beach Post – FL)**

March 10, 2008

“In an increasingly anti-American region, allies need economic help from America. The Colombian free trade agreement would provide it.”

## **Colombia Gives Free Trade A Chance (Investor's Business Daily)**

March 05, 2008

“So here is Colombia, a nation provoked to war by two barbaric neighbors spoiling for a fight, and the only thing it wants from its big ally up north is the passage of a trade pact to drop tariffs on U.S. goods and encourage investment in both countries.... Colombia's refusal to get into a fight with Chavez signals a strong preference for peace through trade and development. If Congress won't approve Colombia's free trade pact after such a demonstration of courage under fire, then it's no better than Chavez.”

## **Uribe! (National Review Online)**

March 5, 2008

“The trade deal with Colombia would cost the U.S. almost nothing — most Colombian goods already enter the U.S. duty-free — but would open Colombia's markets to American exporters, strengthening our economic and security ties to a country that shares our interest in countering terrorism and authoritarianism in South America.... Congress should pass the Colombia FTA as soon as possible to show President Uribe that we support Colombia's fight against terrorists and the regimes that enable them.”

## **Obama's Teamster 'Diplomacy' (Wall Street Journal)**

February 21, 2008

“Consider also that Seoul is willing to open up some of its own politically sensitive industries, such as banking and cars, for the FTA. Mr. Obama might take a look at a report last fall from the International Trade Commission, which says the FTA is expected to boost U.S. GDP by \$10 billion to \$12 billion annually and that the impact on American employment would be ‘negligible.’ In exchange, consumers in both countries would enjoy lower prices and a wider range of goods. Korean President Roh Moo-hyun has put a lot of political capital behind the trade pact and President-elect Lee Myung-bak is also a strong supporter.... A U.S. ‘no’ would be a huge embarrassment for them -- and for American ‘diplomacy.’”

## **Whose Failure On Colombia's Pact? (Investor's Business Daily)**

January 31, 2008

“Following a free-trade delegation led by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Medellin, Colombia, last week, it's astonishing how well some congressional Democrats grasp why a pending free trade agreement with Colombia ought to pass.... Here are the facts: Colombia is a strong hemispheric ally. Most of its goods to this country already come in duty-free. As such, free trade would benefit U.S. companies and workers as much if not more than Colombians. There's no downside.”

## **Bush's End Game (Wall Street Journal)**

January 29, 2008

“We were also glad to see Mr. Bush stress free trade last night, especially the U.S. pacts with Colombia and South Korea now pending in Congress. Free trade is a hard sell even in the best of times, but it is an issue on which a President must spend capital in the national interest. Colombia is a key ally in a bad neighborhood not far from U.S. shores. For Congress to reject Colombia's attempt to link itself to the U.S. economy would be a strategic blunder of the first order.”

## **Free Trade: Worth Fighting For (Investor's Business Daily)**

January 10, 2008

“Recession's winds are blowing and America's strategic position is uncertain. Passing the approved pacts for Colombia, Panama and South Korea will bring great economic opportunity to the U.S. and provide a stable climate for growth for the allies who've stood by us.... If Democrats are serious about winning the White House in 2008, they need to think about the kind of America their leader is going to face in 2009 — one of recession, broken alliances and alienated allies, or a new era of investment and opportunity that will ensure a path to fast growth. Democrats must join President Bush as he makes his plea, and pass free trade now. We sink or swim together.”

## **Peru Down, Colombia to Go (Wall Street Journal)**

December 27, 2007

“By now, most unbiased observers have noted the remarkable job Colombian President Álvaro Uribe has done to return peace and security to that country since taking office in 2002. And we're confident Mr. Rangel wants to do the right thing, but he keeps getting whipsawed by Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the AFL-CIO.... Do Democrats really want to lose Colombia?”

## **Peru trade deal done; two more need action (San Antonio Express-News)**

December 13, 2007

“Beyond the impact on the two countries, the U.S.-Peru agreement's expansion of Western Hemispheric free trade offers a compelling free market alternative to paternalistic and socialistic efforts to fight poverty.... On this note, Congress can follow through by finally passing two other long-delayed free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama. Prosperity is a powerful antidote against authoritarian rulers pushing failed economic policies. Free markets empower free people and free societies. The least the United States can do for friendly democracies in Latin America is bolster them with free trade agreements that, at the same time, also bolster our own economy.”

## **Colombia Pact Rising (Investor's Business Daily)**

December 12, 2007

“The U.S.-Peru free trade pact, to be signed Friday, will not just bring our ally closer and assure its prosperity. It also seems to be generating momentum for the more critical trade deal with Colombia. That's important, because extending free trade with Peru while denying it to Colombia sends a bad message to our 34 southern neighbors that the U.S. isn't all that committed to the region — or reliable as a partner.... The two pacts are about equal, were negotiated at the same time and required the same reforms. Both nations willingly made the changes because they wanted free trade so badly. To give one free trade while leaving the other in the cold will not only alienate both, but will send a message to the region that the U.S. is a mercurial partner unworthy of alignment.”

## **Slapping Our Latin Allies (New York Post)**

December 10, 2007

“Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has been America's closest friend in South America ever since he inherited his fractured, violence-plagued country five years ago. And he's worked nothing short of a miracle, imposing law and order in regions once overrun with Chavez-backed Communist rebels,

powerful drug cartels and paramilitary gangs. Democrats in Congress, however, are holding up a free-trade bill that would help Columbia [sic] get on its feet.”

### **Peru Is In, Now Where's Colombia? (Investor's Business Daily)**

December 04, 2007

“In short, it's Christmas all around, with the free trade zone of the Americas stretching ever farther across the hemisphere's Pacific coast. It is a trade alliance that will bring confidence and prosperity as surely as it will provide an alternative to populist tyranny. That is why the pending trade pact with Colombia is just as critical.... With Peru showing that free trade is alive and passable, there is plenty of cause for celebration. Now is the time to move forward on a deal with Colombia. The momentum must not be lost. There is too much to gain.”

### **A way to boost economy (Orlando Sentinel – FL)**

November 15, 2007

“The U.S. House's recent approval of a free-trade pact with Peru was, as Democratic Rep. Kendrick Meek of Miami declared, ‘a great victory for Florida's economy.’... Trade agreements with Panama, Colombia and South Korea -- three more key trade partners for Florida -- await action from Congress. Passing those deals would stretch the recent victory from the Peru pact into a winning streak for Florida's economy.”

### **Congress finally gets on free trade track (San Antonio Express News - TX)**

November 14, 2007

“It's a good sign that Congress has gotten back on the free trade track with the White House. Now it has to follow through with the other three free trade agreements that will benefit the United States as well as its trading partners.”

### **Deal With Colombia (Washington Post)**

November 9, 2007

“Ratification of the trade promotion agreement would help consolidate Colombia's progress by bringing jobs and income to its people. To make them wait indefinitely while Colombian authorities go through cold-case files would be to substitute some Americans' priorities for those of the Colombian voters who reelected Mr. Uribe last year with over 60 percent of the vote. The United States should not write Mr. Uribe a blank check, but the appropriate means of pressuring him already exist in human rights conditions Congress has attached to Colombia's military aid packages. It's time for Democrats to drop their strained human rights objections to the Colombia trade promotion agreement and deal with it on its merits.”

### **Trading Up (National Review Online)**

November 9, 2007

“But the agreements with Peru, Colombia, and Panama are not about letting U.S. companies outsource jobs.... The new trade agreements simply open the Peruvian, Colombian, and Panamanian markets to American-made goods. It is a question of reciprocity.”

## **Rejecting trade treaty with Colombia won't bolster its stability (South Florida Sun-Sentinel)**

October 29, 2007

“For Congress to now say that it is disgusted by the violence, particularly against one sector of the Colombian population, and to use that argument to undermine a free trade treaty, is a travesty. The free trade treaty ought to be considered on its merits. If it makes sense for the United States, then it should be approved.... Florida has much to gain from this treaty, in terms of financial services and trade through our ports. Our congressional leaders ought to be championing the treaty, not dissing it. Unfortunately, there's a confused mix of economics and human rights advocacy. Shooting down a trade treaty with Colombia isn't the way to bolster stability and hasten an end to paramilitary attacks on civilians.”

## **Colombia Trade Agreement (New York Times)**

October 15, 2007

“We need both free trade and continued transparency and justice to secure a brighter future for Colombia.”

## **Free-trade pacts worth fighting for (Miami Herald)**

October 12, 2007

“Anything that strengthens the bonds between the United States and Latin America is anathema to the enemies of democracy. This is why it is imperative for Congress to approve three pending free-trade agreements with Peru, Panama and Colombia. Failure would strengthen the hand of anti-American forces in the region and undermine efforts by the leaders of those three countries to bolster democratic institutions.... Negotiators have made a sincere effort to deal with the most pressing concerns of critics by improving provisions dealing with the environment and workers' rights. President Bush should keep pressing the case until he carries the day.”

## **Lift Barriers (Orlando Sentinel – FL)**

September 10, 2007

“In fact, the deals with Peru, Panama and Colombia would give U.S. companies the same market access to those countries that their exporters already enjoy in the United States. The agreement with South Korea would open the world's 11th-largest economy to U.S. companies. Notably, it would lower barriers to U.S. auto exports.”

## **Counter Chavez's Mischief (Orlando Sentinel - FL)**

August 26, 2007

“What is important now for the U.S. is to establish a strong network of friends in the region to counter Mr. Chavez's growing influence.... That's another reason why the U.S. should secure pending free-trade deals with Panama, Peru and Colombia.... Strengthening ties between the U.S. and these three countries will boost their economies and provide a strong ideological influence to counter the power play in Venezuela.”

## **Pandering on trade policy bad for business, workers (Denver Post)**

August 20, 2007

“The trade pacts now pending before Congress are designed to knock down existing barriers to U.S. exports. Congress should approve these job-creating trade pacts when it returns from its August vacation.”

## **Approve trade deals around the Pacific (Seattle Times)**

August 15, 2007

“Washington's delegation in Congress should support the trade agreements that have been signed with Peru, Colombia, Panama and South Korea.”

## **Politics As Local Or Plumb 'Loco' (Washington Times)**

August 14, 2007

“By refusing to consider the U.S.-Colombian free trade agreement, Democratic leaders in Congress pervert local U.S. politics and are acting loco, as they put America's best friend in Latin America in grave danger, thereby seriously threatening the stability of Latin America, accurately described as the United States' backyard, geographically and strategically.”

## **Stabilizing Colombia (The Washington Times)**

August 13, 2007

“While Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has proven himself a vigorous advocate for narcotic eradication who has made overseen major improvements to the economic and political stability of his nation (particularly when compared to predecessors), there is undoubtedly much room for improvement. Congress must continue its trajectory for improving Plan Colombia and approve the Colombia free trade agreement.”

## **Congress ignores a friend in need (Miami Herald)**

July 24, 2007

“Helping Colombia is in our national interest. It's about helping our strongest friend in the region, not about catering to a domestic interest group. Unless Congress wants to send a signal that the United States either doesn't care or doesn't know who its friends are -- there are fewer every day -- lawmakers should extend Mr. Uribe a helping hand instead of giving him the back of the hand.”

## **Trade Double-Cross (Wall Street Journal)**

July 5, 2007

“Democrats are promising to improve America's image in the world if they retake the White House next year. Tell that to Peru and Colombia, which are watching Democrats in Congress renege on free-trade assurances that are barely a month old.... Never in our memory has a U.S. trade partner been forced to change its laws before Congress ratifies the deal. As a sovereign nation, Peru has negotiated in good faith, even agreeing to keep open the deal's labor and environmental planks to accommodate Democrats after they won Congress. And for its trouble, Peru now gets to watch American Congressmen play gringo nannies to its domestic political process.... Rejecting the Peru and Colombia deals would be a strategic disaster, playing into the hands of Hugo Chávez and others who want to turn Latin America against the

U.S. And while America sits on the trade sidelines, the rest of the world will keep cutting its own bilateral and regional deals that leave U.S. workers and businesses at a disadvantage.”

### **Trading with Colombia (Chicago Tribune)**

June 23, 2007

“Uribe’s government has made major strides, persuading tens of thousands of combatants to lay down their arms. Murders and kidnappings, the tools of choice during the decades of lawlessness, have dropped dramatically. The result is a more stable country with a booming economy and a strong diplomatic relationship with the U.S. Moreover, Uribe stands for democracy and free markets on a continent that has veered sharply left toward state control.”

### **The struggle for Colombia (San Francisco Chronicle)**

June 13, 2007

“There exists a country that has managed, with American aid, to stabilize its government, disarm most of its militias, drastically slash crime and foster economic growth. It’s Colombia, and despite well-founded concerns about this country’s continuing troubles, it deserves our support.”

### **Promote free trade (Orlando Sentinel)**

May 14, 2007

“Our position: Florida's economy wins big when barriers around the world fall. The deal on environmental and worker protections is expected to pave the way for congressional approval of free-trade agreements with Peru and Panama, and raise the chances for passage of pacts with Colombia and South Korea. Each of those agreements would create new opportunities for U.S. exporters and investors while reducing prices for consumers. They would invite more of the kind of foreign investments that have created 6 million U.S. jobs.... Peru, Panama and Colombia are among the leading destinations for Florida exports.... In addition to their economic benefits, passage of the trade agreements with Peru, Panama and Colombia would strengthen U.S. ties with those countries. It would help counter the growing influence in Latin America of Venezuela's anti-American demagogue, Hugo Chavez.”

### **Losing Latin America (Wall Street Journal)**

May 4, 2007

“A defeat for any of the three would do great harm to the Andean region, where democrats are battling Hugo Chávez's neo-socialist populism. Mr. Uribe, Peruvian President Alan Garcia and Panamanian President Martin Torrijos have all bet their futures on opening their economies to the U.S. If they're rebuffed, the local disciples of Mr. Chávez will say they were right not to trust the capitalist Yankees.... On economic grounds alone, the U.S. has everything to gain by approving these trade deals. Most Peruvian and Colombian exports already have duty-free access to the U.S. market through the Andean Trade Preferences Act. But U.S. manufacturing and farm exports heading south still face high tariff and non-tariff barriers. The regional financial center of Panama is especially attractive for U.S. services but is likewise a protected market.”